



Academic Engagement NETWORK

In This Issue

- Latest Updates
- Microgrant Events
- Campus Updates
- Interview with Arielle Mokhtarzadeh
- Member Writings

Website

For more information and updates, please check out our [website!](#)

Keep Up With Us



Facebook



Twitter

February 2018 Newsletter

Latest Updates

AEN now has **527 members on 196 campuses**. In January, AEN recruited 9 new members. So far in February, AEN has recruited 5 new members. AEN is currently doing a membership drive, reaching out to members in different regions each week asking for names of potential members - we thank all the members who have already suggested names to contact.

AEN Symposium on Free Speech and Campus Violence and Disruption

On January 25, AEN and the Northwestern Pritzker School of Law hosted a **Symposium on Free Speech and Campus Violence and Disruption** at the law school in Chicago, IL. The symposium focused on a number of timely issues relating to current discussions about free speech on campus.

The first panel, "What Type of Forum is a University? What is the Scope of Permissible Time, Place and Manner Regulation?" was moderated by Mark Yudof of AEN and featured Professor Heidi Kitrosser of the University of Minnesota Law

promoting and defending free speech, and examined the complexities involved in determining what are appropriate and permissible regulations of speech.

The second panel, "Campus Speech and Disruption," was moderated by Sam Tenenbaum (AEN) of the Northwestern Pritzker School of Law, Professor Sheldon Nahmod (AEN) of the Chicago Kent School of Law, Ken Waltzer of AEN, and Mike Atkins of AEN. The panelists discussed issues such as the "heckler's veto," the historical, sociological, and structural reasons for increased disruptions on campus, and the importance of establishing and updating clear codes of conduct.

The third panel, "Campus Speech and Violence," was also moderated by Sam Tenenbaum and featured Mark Yudof, Mark Rotenberg (AEN) of Hillel International, and Professor Charles Lipson (AEN) of the University of Chicago. The panelists discussed ways to balance promoting robust debates and a diversity of opinion with the need to consider public safety, as well as the challenge of determining the limits of free speech.

The fourth and final panel, "Free Speech, Hate and Campus Climate," was moderated by Ken Waltzer and featured Professor Geoffrey Stone of the University of Chicago, President Tim Killeen of the University of Illinois, Chancellor Richard Herman of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Emily Briskman of the Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago, and Professor Jide Nzelibe of the Northwestern Pritzker School of Law. The panelists described how their own institutions addressed the issues of supporting and defending free speech, responding to disturbances, and disciplining disruptors, and discussed how free speech was central to efforts to improve civic engagement, protect minority groups, and advance social movements.

Principal Deputy Associate Attorney General Jesse Panuccio delivered a **keynote address**, in which he emphasized the centrality of freedom of speech, expression, and intellectual inquiry to the purposes of the university, and discussed likely policy commitments by the Attorney General's office regarding the protection of free speech rights on campus.



Video recordings of the entire symposium can be viewed on [AEN's website](#). Additional photos from the event can be viewed on [AEN's Facebook page](#). An [article](#) in the *Washington Free Beacon* referred to the symposium while discussing the high costs UC Berkeley has paid for security during recent events featuring controversial speakers.

Free Speech Symposium at UNLV

On February 13, to follow up on the symposium in Chicago, both Mark and Ken participated in another **symposium on free speech on campus** at the University of Nevada, William Boyd School of Law, along with Howard Gillman, Chancellor of the University of California, Irvine. Speakers emphasized the importance of reinforcing free speech values on campuses and explored a range of concrete actions university administrations can take to deal with the challenge of controversial outside speakers, such as the proactive revision of university codes and regulations, the creative use of time, place, and manner restrictions, establishing a firm voice on behalf of free speech, and developing new initiatives in educating students about the value and centrality of free speech. The symposium was **covered** by the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*.

New Position at AEN - Senior Associate for Membership Services and Diversity

AEN is seeking an experienced professional to serve as Senior Associate for Membership Services and Diversity. The Senior Associate will be responsible for developing and implementing strategies to extend and deepen AEN's membership; recruiting new members and conducting outreach to current members; and

degree or Ph.D. in a relevant field, a visible record of working on campus against BDS and on behalf of academic freedom or free speech, and familiarity with faculty roles and campus politics. Experience as a faculty member is highly desirable. Please see the [job posting](#) for a detailed description of the position - we encourage you to share this opportunity with anyone you feel may be interested and qualified.

AEN Regional Short Course in Cleveland

AEN is now accepting applications for its regional short course in Cleveland, OH (May 14-17, 2018). These courses are designed to give AEN members an opportunity to learn more about contemporary 21st century Israel, develop strategies related to BDS on campus, and network with other interested faculty. You can find a detailed description of the course and instructions on how to apply [on our website](#).

Microgrant Events

An AEN microgrant to Martin Schichtman, Professor of English and Director of the Center for Jewish Studies at Eastern Michigan University, supported three events featuring Dr. Rachel Harris of the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign: a mini-course on "Gender, Race, and Racism: Israeli Cinema at the Cutting Edge" at the Ann Arbor JCC (February 3-4); a public lecture, "Women at the Camera: Feminist Filmmaking in Israel" at Eastern Michigan University (February 5); and a talk about her book, *Warriors, Witches, Whores: Women in Israeli Cinema* at Wayne State University (February 6). More than 50 students and 20 community members attended Dr. Harris's evening lecture at EMU, with most students coming from programs in History/Philosophy, English Language and Literature, and Communications, Media, and Theater Arts. EMU has seen several recent student attempts to delegitimize Israel—Students for Justice in Palestine had painted an "apartheid wall" on campus and there have been fliers about Israel's detention of Ahd Tamimi. The AEN-supported events offered a compelling alternate narrative, portraying Israel as a country facing many of the same issues as the United States, England, Germany, and France. Focusing on feminist filmmaking in Israel, Dr. Harris talked about how the Jewish state is struggling to overcome histories of inequality and injustice to create better art and provide a better environment for its citizens.

On February 6, Steven Resnicoff, Professor of Law and Director of the Center for Jewish Law and Judaic Studies at DePaul University, hosted Dr. Joshua Muravchik, who spoke on the topic, "Making David into Goliath: Has the Left Betrayed its Commitment to Human Rights, and, If So, What is to be Done about It?" Around 40 people attended the lecture, and all attendees received hard copies of the 20-25

On March 21, Jonathan Marks, Professor of Politics at Ursinus College, will host J. J. Goldberg, editor at large at the *Forward*, and Jonathan Tobin, opinion editor at JNS and a National Review contributor. The two will debate critical issues concerning the State of Israel.

AEN micro-grants are available to AEN members in amounts of up to \$4,000 for the 2017-18 academic year. Initiatives may be aimed at confronting BDS and its claims about Israel, educating about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, affirming academic freedom and free expression on campus, exploring relevant aspects of Israeli society, culture, and diversity, and combating antisemitism. If you are interested in applying for an AEN micro-grant, please fill out the **application** on our website.

Campus Updates

As BDS efforts continue on campuses, pro-Israel students are increasingly savvy about painting these efforts as divisive, procedurally invalid, and beyond the purview of student governments.

Ohio State University

A **resolution** to “Establish a Committee to Investigate OSU's Investments in Companies Complicit in Human Rights Violations,” was passed 23-18-1 on January 24 by Ohio State University's Undergraduate Student Government. However, specific references to Israel, the Palestinians, and Yemen that were in the original resolution were taken out of the version that ultimately passed.

Northeastern University

On February 12, Northeastern University's Student Government Association (SGA) voted to reject a pro-BDS **referendum question** by a vote of 6-49-16., blocking the question from being placed on the ballot during next month's student government elections. Pro-Israel students - with the help of the Israel on Campus Coalition (ICC) - utilized numerous tactics to achieve this positive result, including launching an **online petition** that called on SGA to reject the BDS question based on procedural violations; canvassing the student government in order to identify supporters and detractors; and developing message-tested talking points to influence student senators to vote against the BDS question.

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

On February 14, pro-Israel students at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) introduced a resolution in the Illinois Student Government (ISG) that called on the Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs to block a SJP-backed BDS referendum question from being placed on UIUC's election ballot in

framing arguments. Nelson also spoke during the hearing, countering a pro-BDS faculty member.

The resolution was ultimately sent to UIUC's Campus Affairs Committee, which voted to table the resolution indefinitely. Pro-Israel students also attempted to block the BDS referendum question from being placed on the election ballot by submitting a case to the judiciary committee, who will hear the case within the week. These efforts to block the BDS referendum question serve as distractions for SJP, which would otherwise be spending its time collecting the 2,400 signatures needed by Wednesday, February 28 to officially get the BDS referendum question on the ballot.

Please feel free to **reach out**, if there is a situation on your campus you would like AEN to know about.

Interview with Arielle Mokhtarzadeh

Many AEN members have expressed interest in hearing the perspectives of current students, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the various challenges they face on campus, the proactive ways in which they respond to pro-BDS and anti-Israel activities, and how they feel faculty and administrators can best support them in their efforts.



Arielle Mokhtarzadeh, the descendant of Iranian Jews, currently serves as President of the Undergraduate Student Association Council at UCLA. After an incident in January in which the mezuzah on her office's doorpost was torn down, she **invited the whole campus** to join her in dedicating a new one (see photo above). AEN Senior Communications Associate Raeeza Shams spoke to Arielle about leadership, administrative support, and effective faculty engagement.

What inspired you to pursue a leadership role at UCLA?

I didn't pursue leadership at UCLA. Leadership at UCLA found me. I enrolled at UCLA at a time when it wasn't so pleasant to be outwardly, proudly Jewish. In my first year alone a friend and I discovered that the phrase "Hitler did nothing wrong" had been etched into a table at a campus cafe, a friend of mine -- Rachel Beyda -- had originally been denied a position of leadership based solely on her Jewish identity, and swastikas appeared at UC campuses across the state. In that year we had a critical decision to make: to give into self-victimization and accept that these

and proud Jewish student leader at UCLA -- who is engaged and cares deeply for the experiences of others on campus.

In the aftermath of the your mezuzah being torn down, did you find the response from UCLA's administration, fellow students, and/or faculty to be helpful? What were some of the positive responses you received?

My first action after identifying that the mezuzah had been removed was to contact the building manager to ensure it hadn't accidentally been removed or knocked over by the building staff. I was assured by the staff that if anything of that nature ever happened, that they were the first to know and that they had not been notified about anything. I then took photos and immediately notified the administration and UCPD. The administrators and officers expressed their apologies and pointed me toward appropriate reporting options. I was struck by the support I received from them -- in addition to members of the Jewish community around the world. One of the most poignant responses was from Assemblymember Marc Levine who shared that he had also received a mezuzah while he was the Student Body President at CSUN -- the same mezuzah that now hangs from his office in the state capitol. It was especially meaningful to see members of the administration at the rededication ceremony.

From your perspective, what are some of the most pressing challenges facing Jewish students on campus today?

The most pressing challenge facing Jewish students on campus today is the fact that many of us are being made to believe that we need to make the false choice between being engaged members of the Jewish community or engaged members of the campus community. In this day and age in which we recognize the heightened importance of identity -- and intersectional identities, at that -- there is no reason why Jewish students should be made to feel that they need to check their identity at the door.

Have you ever worked with faculty or administrators to support Israel, oppose BDS, and/or combat anti-Semitism on campus? If so, what were some of the ways in which they were helpful?

I have found the UCLA administration to be helpful in combating anti-Semitism and in supporting Jewish students. We are in open communication, updating and sharing information with each other whenever appropriate. What sets our administration apart is its readiness to engage with students and see them as partners when addressing intolerance on campus.

What are some other ways in which faculty can effectively support Jewish and pro-Israel students on campus?

Week after week we read headlines of this and that professor at this and that

and Zionist professors who are proud of their identities -- and don't feel the need to preach their politics to their students. One of my favorite events Bruins for Israel, our Israel community on campus, organizes is our Student-Professor Dinner. Each year we have 50 professors (and growing) sit down to break bread with 100 students (and growing) to discuss our shared experiences on campus. Events like these help establish confidence, security and community.

Member Writings

In *Commentary*, Jonathan Marks **analyzed** a recent Pew survey indicating a wide partisan divide with regard to support for Israel. "Conservative and moderate Democrats still sympathize with Israel over the Palestinians by a 2-to-1 margin, but that support has fallen sharply since 2016...Like the movement of the party overall, the change reflects movement into the "both," "neither," and "don't know" columns, rather than a definite anti-Israel trend. There is no decisive reason to believe that these people cannot be won back or that some semblance of the long-enduring bipartisan consensus on Israel cannot be restored."

In the *New York Jewish Week*, Thane Rosenbaum **critiqued** a recent measure passed by the Polish Parliament that would outlaw any suggestion that Poland was involved in the crimes of the Nazis. "The danger is no longer, as George Santayana once said, that 'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.' With facts so easily dismissible and history fabricated on the fly, the risk today is not knowing what the past even was."

In the *Wall Street Journal*, Steven Pinker **extolled** the success of Enlightenment values in shaping human progress and prosperity. "Secular liberal democracies are the happiest and healthiest places on earth, and the favorite destinations of people who vote with their feet. And once you appreciate that the Enlightenment project of applying knowledge and sympathy to enhance human flourishing can succeed, it's hard to imagine anything more heroic and glorious." Pinker also gave an **interview** to the *Weekly Standard* on his new book and his critique of contemporary identity politics.

In the *Forward*, Steven Lubet posted a **detailed account** refuting an accusation from Jewish Voice for Peace and other pro-Palestinian groups that "pro-Israel advocacy groups" had interfered in the search for a professor of Middle East Studies at Fresno State University. "Despite all accusations to the contrary, 'Israel advocacy groups' had nothing to do with the suspension of the Said Professorship search, which will resume, following a short interruption, later this year. Sadly, it appears that anti-Zionist conspiracy theorists will be taking no time off at all."

Subscribe

Past Issues

tweeting, please let us know!

Copyright © 2017, Academic Engagement Network, All rights reserved.

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

This email was sent to <<Email Address>>

[why did I get this?](#) [unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)
Academic Engagement Network · P.O. Box 34640 · Washington, DC 20043 · USA

MailChimp